

Remarks

The Office Action has been reviewed with care and certain amendments made which are believed to place this application in condition for allowance. Applicants appreciate the attention of the Examiner to this patent application and the indication of allowability of claims 6-8, 13, 14 and 16.

Claims 17 and 20 were objected to because of formalities. Each of claims 17 and 20 is herein canceled.

Claims 1-5, 9-10 and 17-19 have been rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Chatel (U.S. Patent No. 5,506,751) in view of Sittig (U.S. Patent No. 5,954,122). Claims 11-12, 15 and 20 have been rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Chatel in view of Sittig and in further view of Wetzel et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,804,751).

In response to the 35 USC 103(a) rejection, the Applicants again submit that the Office Action is reading elements into the Chatel which do not exist. Specifically, in response to Applicants' argument submitted in the July 25, 2002 response, the Office Action states "Chatel discloses two panels (12,13) [adjustably] secured in a frame by screws (24) into holes of the panels (12,13). The panel (12) shows holes and the screws (24) can be secured [into] either one of the holes on each of the [panels] for adjusting the panels fastened to the frame."

Applicants request that the Examiner identify such optionally-used holes or disclose where such optionally-used holes exist. In the absence of such a showing, the Applicants point out that Figure 1 clearly shows multiple screws (24) being used to fix panel 12 to side rails (20,21 and 22,23). No holes remain unused or optionally-usable. Therefore, because every disclosed hole is filled with a screw and Chatel fails to disclose any other "hole" into which a screw may be optionally secured to adjust the distance between rails, there cannot be any choice of holes or adjustment based on such a choice of holes. Furthermore, nowhere in the disclosure of Chatel is it mentioned that the distance between rails (20,21) and rails (22,23) may be adjusted by any means, let alone by choosing optionally-usable holes on panels (12,13).

With regard to Sittig, Figure 3 plainly shows that the clamps (22) do not compress the second edge, shown as the upper edge, of plate (16). Instead, clamps are used along with cam

surface (22) to provide a tightening force from flat surface (18) against the broad side-surface of the plate (against the right side as depicted).

In fact, Sittig explains clearly that the "adjustability" of clamps is intended to allow each clamp to be pushed downward, out of contact with cam surface (20) so that plate may be positioned into slot, i.e., clamps are removed from the slots so that plates can be inserted into the slots. Then each clamp is released and is pulled back into its normal position in the slot by tensioning spring (26). At column 2, lines 29-31, Sittig states "shock or vibration to device 10 resulting in a movement of plates translates into a tightening action of clamps 22 on plates 16," i.e., clamps are pulled upward against the cam surface and exert an increasing force against the broad side-surface of the plates.

Sittig does not disclose: 1) an adjustment mechanism which contacts the second (upper) edge of a circuit board, 2) an edge retention member which compresses a circuit board by contacting the second edge, 3) a compressive force which is exerted substantially parallel to the broad side-surface of a circuit board, 4) a compressive force which is exerted substantially coincident to the broad side-surface of a circuit board; or 5) a second adjustment mechanism which maintains the second distance after adjustment. Each of these elements is required in claims submitted herein.

Instead Sittig discloses: 1) a clamp which contacts only the broad side-surface of a plate, 2) a clamp which compresses a plate by contacting only the broad side-surface; 3-4) a compressive force which is exerted substantially normal or perpendicular to the broad side-surface of a plate, and 5) a clamp which repeatedly decreases the second distance upon shocks or vibrations and is not intended to maintain the adjusted-to distance (in fact, a clamp which maintained the adjusted-to distance would defeat the intent of the Sittig device since shocks and vibrations would not result in the tightening of the clamp).

Therefore, the Applicants reiterate their prior arguments that, as required by independent claims 1, 5 and 21:

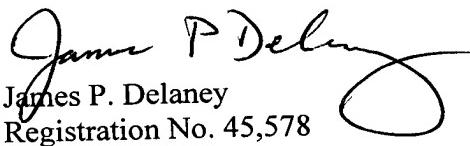
- the first adjustment mechanism must permit adjustment of the distance between the board retention member and the engagement platform.
- the platform and board retention member compress the circuit board by contacting the first and second edges.

These requirements are not disclosed or made obvious by any combination of the cited prior art.

As stated above, Chatel discloses a rigid, non-adjustable connection between its side rails and connecting panel by providing holes into which an equal number of screws are inserted and by not providing any additional holes for adjustability. The Chatel rack is intended simply to house circuit boards. It is not intended for use during vibrational-type tests and is not intended to address the problems associated with such testing. Furthermore, as explained above, Sittig provides only for contact with a plate along its broad-side surface – not along its edges. Sittig also requires a clamp which is affected by vibrations and shocks such that it reduces its respective ‘second distance’ and abuts a cam surface to increase a force normal to the broad side-surface of the plate.

Because each of the independent claims includes elements not disclosed or made obvious by the cited prior art, applicant believes that all claims as amended are in proper form for allowance and early favorable action is earnestly solicited. The Examiner is invited to call the undersigned attorney if that would be helpful in facilitating resolution of any issues which might remain.

Respectfully submitted,


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